

To: Mylott, Richard[Mylott.Richard@epa.gov]
Cc: Gray, David[gray.david@epa.gov];
steve.gorman@thomsonreuters.com[steve.gorman@thomsonreuters.com]
From: steve.gorman@thomsonreuters.com
Sent: Tue 8/11/2015 3:45:08 AM
Subject: RE: EPA Gold King Mine response

Many thanks for your response at this late hour, Mr. Mylott.

I was not aware until now, not from anything I've heard on the daily teleconference calls or read in the daily text updates issued by EPA, that the effluent, as it is now being discharged into Cement Creek after being treated in the four newly constructed settling ponds, is cleaner (higher pH and lower levels of metals) than pre-event, background conditions in the creek.

That seems like a pretty important breakthrough in terms of the ongoing discharge. So that, in effect, additional contaminants are no longer being introduced to local streams. I guess that means the main concern now is on defining and managing the contamination that has already been introduced, both in terms of how far it has traveled downstream, and what may happen to metals that have been deposited in river-bottom sediments.

My one remaining question that none of this has answered is: what is the approximate extent of contamination from this spill. Not how far the main plume got before its leading edge was no longer discernible from aerial surveys. But from sampling of elevated levels of the constituent contaminants, or any of the 24 metals you're testing for, can you say the contamination has reached at least as far as Utah by now, or would have been expected to?

Thanks again for your assistance.

--Steve

From: Mylott, Richard [mailto:Mylott.Richard@epa.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2015 7:35 PM
To: Gorman, Steve J. (Reuters News)
Subject: EPA Gold King Mine response

Steve-- I received your email below from colleagues here at EPA, hope below helps.

Also- an update here. <http://www2.epa.gov/region8/gold-king-mine-release-emergency-response>

Thanks,

Rich Mylott

USEPA Region 8

303-312-6654

EPA estimates the release event on August 5 was approximately 3M gallons. EPA's cleanup team was at the site to investigate potential measures to address ongoing water releases from the mine.

EPA has constructed four ponds at the mine site and is treating current water releases (which have ranged from 400-800 gallons per minute) by lowering acidity levels and removing dissolved metals. This system is discharging treated water to Cement Creek at levels cleaner (higher pH and lower levels of metals) than pre-event, background conditions in the creek. Over the next several days, EPA will make upgrades to the system to ensure its continued operation.

Aerial and ground reconnaissance indicates that the plume associated with the Gold King Mine release has dissipated downstream and there is no leading edge of contamination visible in downstream sections of the San Juan River or Lake Powell. Ultimately, the water quality data we are collecting will define the plume.

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steve.gorman@thomsonreuters.com

Hey folks,

Steve Gorman here from Reuters in Los Angeles. We unfortunately missed today's conference call update on the Gold King Mine Release, and I have not found anything online that that appears to be obviously new, compared with Sunday's update. One tidbit I found was that the release has now reached Nenahnezad, N.M., about 9 miles west of Farmington, as of 3

p.m. yesterday (Sunday?) But I see nothing new about revised estimates for total volume released, which I assume should be rising daily since the discharge continues at the rate of approximately 500 gallons per minute.

At that rate, it seems reasonable to calculate that the total release volume has grown by at least 720,000 gallons above the previous 3-million-gallon figure over the past 24 hours. But if you have a more precise revised figure from the USGS stream gauge, that would be ideal.

Also, can the EPA quantify the degree to which the settling pond treatment has been successful in reducing the levels of heavy metal solids that remain in the wastewater that flows into Cement Creek from the mine site, compared to the concentrations present before the ponds were built? In any case, could someone please call me briefly, even if you don't have answers to any or all of the questions posed here?

I'd be much obliged, and we'll be sure to be on tomorrow's call when it takes place.

Thanks again for your kind attention.

Steve Gorman

Steven Gorman
Correspondent, Los Angeles

Reuters News

Thomson Reuters

Phone: +1 213-955-6761
Mobile: 213-840-6521